

VALUE COMMUNICATION: Lying, cheating, and stealing are an unfortunate part of street life. We show our kids—by example—that street “values” are really not values at all. Even more importantly, we teach them that caring, wholesome relationships are based on trust, respect and honesty.

STRUCTURE: Street life has no structure. Kids on the street never know where they will sleep, or where they will get their next meal. We provide that structure—a stable set of expectations, without a great deal of unnecessary rules and regulations. This structure provides our youth with the freedom they need to help them focus on their futures.

*Covenant House is no panacea for runaways
...30% are being reunited with their parents,
and...that alone makes the program worthwhile.*

NBC News

No matter how hard we try, our success depends on the willingness that the youngster shows to make a **CHOICE**. Our kids must choose to believe in themselves, to make serious choices about their futures, to believe that they can make it.

Father Ritter looks on all the youngsters at Covenant House—those whom society has already written off as failures before their lives have more than barely begun—as gifts from God.

NC News Service

Your Part Of The Covenant

Overwhelmingly, we receive help for our kids from people like you who really care about children, and not from government tax dollars. We are happy to report that every year we are able to direct more and more of the donations that we receive right to the needs of our kids. And so many more need our help.

Won't you join us in the fight to save good kids from the terror and degradation of street life? Please send whatever gift you can, today.

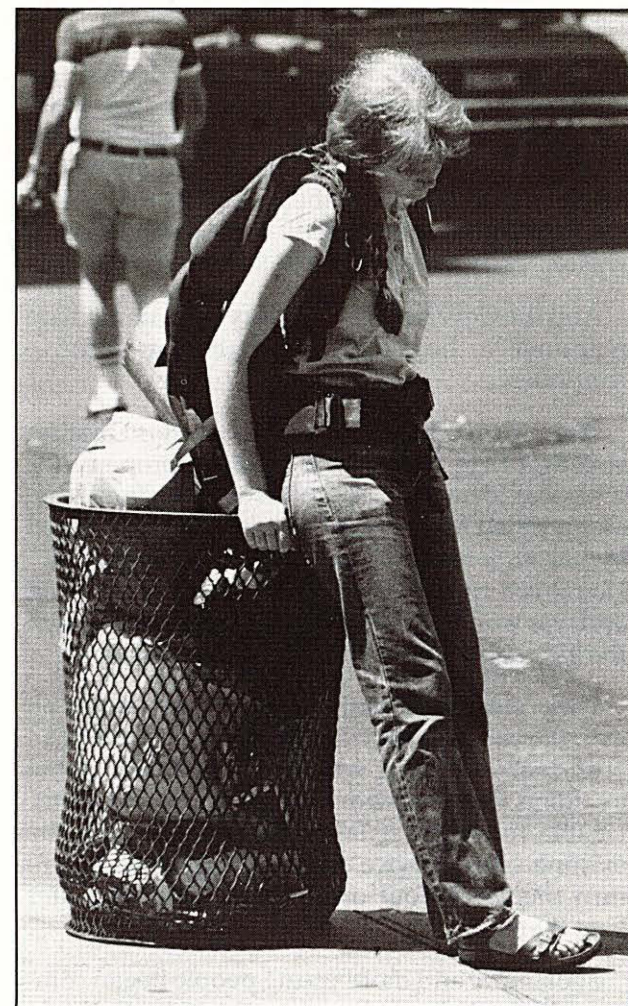
At a time when governmental budget cuts threaten the limited programs available, Father Ritter's Covenant House stands as an example of what can be done almost entirely with private funds.

The Wall Street Journal*



Covenant House / Florida
733 Breakers Ave.
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33304

An Immediate Response to Homeless Youth in Need



The sexual exploitation of our young will stop only when we get angry enough to do something about it. As Father Bruce got angry and is doing.

Reader's Digest

Covenant House

No Place For A Child

A knock on the door in the early hours of a cold, snowy February morning. Six kids: four boys, two girls—shivering, sad—ask to sleep on the floor. A priest—uncertain, dismayed—agrees reluctantly to let them stay the night. The next day, four more needy kids come seeking shelter. The Covenant House story begins.

And the Covenant House story—the immediate response to homeless and runaway youth—continues.

When Father Bruce Ritter took in those first six street youth in 1968, he was totally unprepared for what was to happen. A professor of medieval theology, he left Manhattan College when challenged by his students to “practice what he preached.” He moved to the Lower East Side of Manhattan and was working there with the urban poor when the kids approached him.

Their story was pathetic. Runaways from all over the country, they had been burned out of an abandoned building where they had been living by some junkies who were pimping for them. Unable to find assistance for them among the existing social service agencies, and unwilling to turn them back out on the street, Father Ritter kept them.

Soon more and more young people began coming for the help and shelter they could obtain nowhere else.

With almost no funds and mostly volunteer support, Covenant House was licensed in 1972 to operate homes for runaways and abandoned kids. In 1977, Covenant House opened its first crisis center in Times Square, New York.

Through the years, Covenant House earned a reputation for its work with homeless and run-

away youth, mostly because of its 24-hour availability and its comprehensive service program. We began to receive numerous requests for advice from groups all over the world on how to develop similar programs.

Other communities requested that we not only advise them on how to provide services for their homeless youth, but that we open our own programs in their area. Covenant House responded to this challenge and opened programs in Toronto (1982), in Houston (1983), and Ft. Lauderdale (1985). Another program is scheduled to open in New Orleans in 1987.

The Covenant

*Covenants are permanent kinds of things.
Covenant means constancy, fidelity—not
going away, being there when you're needed.*

Father Bruce Ritter

How do we respond to the kids that come to Covenant House? How can we reach out to an abandoned, abused, and hurting street kid, and make him know that we really do care?

We care for our kids in the context of a **covenant relationship**—a special kind of caring, no string relationship, that God extends to us. We are committed to accepting each child in our care as a precious, unique—and fragile human being, with very special needs.

And then there are the unsung heroes. A person like Father Bruce Ritter is always there. His Covenant House programs...provide shelter to thousands of frightened and abused children each year.

Ronald Reagan

Father Ritter's Covenant House programs have become the yardstick by which others are measured.

Life Magazine

We extend this caring Covenant Relationship to our kids in Five Ways:

IMMEDIACY: The kids that come to us are in crisis, desperate for help. Immediately, and without question, we provide for their basic human needs—food, clothing, a shower, medical attention if they need it, and a place safe, and far removed from the terror and degradation of the street.

...Covenant House will open its doors and introduce a whole new set of rules to The Strip — rules no longer dominated by profit and exploitation.

John de Groot

Ft. Lauderdale News Sun-Sentinel

Father Ritter can't walk down the street without being asked for help. For many, he is the only one who will listen.

P.M. Magazine

SANCTUARY: Often, kids who are trying to leave street life are scared and mistrustful. We provide protection—from the terror of the street. Children can grow only when they feel safe and protected.

For the past seventeen years, a heroic story has been happening... I'm talking about Covenant House, a refuge for hundreds of homeless and runaway youth. It's absolutely beautiful.

Merv Griffin